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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [SG](#)
SUBJECT: IDRISSE SECK TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT

REFS: A) DAKAR 0565; B) DAKAR 0316

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROY L. WHITAKER, FOR
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Ex-PM Idrissa Seck, released from prison less than two months ago, has declared he will run for president. In declaring, he reiterated denials that he made any deal with President Wade for his release, echoed friends' and allies' call for national "redressement" or recovery, and called, no doubt consciously in vain, for the opposition to rally to him. Seck may have calculated that Wade is vulnerable, the opposition is hapless, and that he must act before bitter enemies in the PDS undermine him. END SUMMARY.

DECLARING POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

2. (U) PM Idrissa Seck announced April 4, Senegalese Independence Day, that he is a candidate for President. He reiterated that he had not agreed with Wade on any preconditions for his February 17 release from prison, and said such a deal would be "a double abomination, both moral and political ... which would transform a judicial affair into a hostage-taking with ransom demand and ... reinforce suspicions that (Senegalese) justice acts according to executive fiat." He argued that for two years he had been the target of official "aggression."

3. (U) Seck said he would submit to voters a project for national "redressement" (rectification or recovery) by a "team representative of the skills and virtues of our people." He would seek support first of all within the ruling Democratic Party of Senegal (PDS), which he called "my natural family, in the sense of those men and women who openly or in secret share my vision and values." He would also seek backing from other parties both within the country and in the Senegalese diaspora. He then called on the opposition to rally to him, an invitation which opposition co-leader, the Alliance des Forces du Progres' Moustapha Niasse, promptly rejected.

COMMENT

4. (C) In deciding to run for president now rather than hunker down within the PDS and wait for Wade to rehabilitate him, Seck must have made several assumptions or calculations, including: 1) Wade would be vulnerable to an effective challenge; 2) the opposition is disorganized while its presumptive candidate, Moustapha Niasse, lacks energy or charisma; and, 3) within the PDS, he must act before enemies led by Prime Minister Macky Sall undermine his popular support and party structures he has built, especially in his populous hometown of Thies.

5. (C) Two things stand out in Seck's declaration of

candidacy. First, he was insistent he made no bargain with Wade as the price for release from prison. This is apparently important to Senegalese voters, who, we are often told, will energetically back an underdog but not someone who openly compromised his principles. Second, Seck's "projet de redressement" recalls language used by Kaolack Tidjane religious leader Mamoune Niasse and youth leader Talla Sylla, with whom he has been in touch since immediately after his release. Seck may hope these small parties, among others, will provide needed money, activists and organization.

16. (C) We doubt Seck really expected the opposition to rally immediately to his cause, and Niasse's rejection of his invitation cannot have been a surprise. Seck may hope, though, that over several months he will draw significant support from opposition cadres disenchanted with their leaders. END COMMENT.
JACKSON